

THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

There are 111 Canons in Canon Law dealing with the Sacrament of Marriage, beginning with what must occur before the marriage takes place (marriage preparation) through the topic of validations and annulments. This bulletin article will not deal with the annulment process. I will briefly, for some sense of clarity, address the basic misunderstanding of an annulment. An annulment does not invalidate the legal marriage and has no negative effect on children which result from the legal marriage. In fact, to begin the annulment process, two key pieces of information needed are a marriage license and a divorce decree. What an annulment seeks to prove is that, while a celebration of the sacrament happened, there was something about the union which lacked the sacramental character of the union. An annulment invalidates the presence of a supposed sacramental union, not the legal question of marriage. Additionally, when one “attempts” marriage without a previous marriage (prior bond) being annulled, they temporarily remove themselves from certain sacramental aspects of the Church, such as the reception of communion, or serving as a godparent or sponsor for other sacraments. For more information about the annulment process, please contact the Diocese of Youngstown website regarding the Tribunal.

The proceeding few Canons deal with the requirements for the marriage process to begin. At Saint Michael, at least one of the two to be married must be registered and attending Mass frequently (see below if a member of another parish). As an engaged adult seeking marriage, you do not remain a “child” member under your parents’ registration. Additionally, the adult couple seeking to get married must make all inquiries (not a parent or other family members).

Can. 1055 §1. The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life and which is ordered by its nature to the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring, has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament between the baptized.

PRECEDING THE CELEBRATION OF MARRIAGE

Can. 1063 **Pastors of souls** are obliged to take care that their ecclesiastical community offers the Christian faithful the **assistance by which the matrimonial state is preserved in a Christian spirit and advances in perfection**. This assistance must be offered especially by: *Pastor of souls implies a relationship between the pastor and the Catholic party / parties to be married, thus, they must be members of the parish (registered and participating) & celebration the sacraments. If they are not members of the*

parish, but have some familial connection to the parish, they need permission from the pastor where they do attend in order to be married in a church other than their church of residence.

1/ preaching, catechesis adapted to minors, youth, and adults, and even the use of instruments of social communication, by which the Christian faithful are instructed about the meaning of Christian marriage and about the function of Christian spouses and parents;

2/ personal preparation to enter marriage, which disposes the spouses to the holiness and duties of their new state;

3/ a fruitful liturgical celebration of marriage which is to show that the spouses signify and share in the mystery of the unity and fruitful love between Christ and the Church;

Can. 1065 §1. Catholics who have not yet received the sacrament of confirmation are to receive it before they are admitted to marriage if it can be done without grave inconvenience. *Strongly recommended*

§2. To receive the sacrament of marriage fruitfully, spouses are urged especially to approach the sacraments of penance and of the Most Holy Eucharist. *Strongly recommended*

Can. 1066 Before a marriage is celebrated, **it must be evident that nothing stands in the way of its valid and licit celebration.** *Any prior bond (previous marriage) must be annulled by the Catholic Church (even for non-Catholic parties) in order to enter into a valid marriage in the Catholic Church.*

Can. 1067 The conference of bishops is to establish norms about the examination of spouses and about the **marriage banns** or other opportune means to accomplish the investigations necessary before marriage. After these norms have been diligently observed, the pastor can proceed to assist at the marriage.

Can. 1069 **All the faithful are obliged** to reveal any impediments they know about to the pastor or local ordinary before the celebration of the marriage. *Marriage Banns are not a beautiful announcement of an upcoming wedding – they were established so any member of the parish who had information why a marriage should not happen in the Catholic Church should come forward with such information. They were traditionally published in the bulletin for a few weeks leading to the celebration. Admittedly, a little late by then. Hopefully, any pertinent information regarding one's inability to enter into a sacramental union would be known prior to this.*